

What is claimed is:

1. A data conversion rule switching device for switching data conversion rules in accordance with a target device in order to respectively control a plurality of target devices in response to operation of a plurality of controls provided outside or inside the data conversion rule switching device, said data conversion rule switching device comprising:

a plurality of data communication ports for externally connecting with the plurality of target devices and transmitting operation data corresponding to operation of the plurality of controls and generated in response to the operation to the plurality of target devices;

an assignor for assigning the plurality of data communication ports one by one to each of the plurality of target devices, respectively;

a setter for setting a data conversion rule suitable for control of the target device assigned to the data communication port, for each of the plurality of data communication ports;

a selector for selecting a desired data communication port from among the plurality of data communication ports;

a converter for converting operation data corresponding to operation of the plurality of controls and generated in response to the operation in accordance with the data conversion rule set for the selected data communication port; and

a sender for sending the converted operation data to the selected data communication port.

2. A data conversion rule switching device according to claim 1, further comprising a detector for detecting the data communication port selected by the selector, wherein

the conversion of the operation data by the converter and the sending

of the converted operation data to the data communication port by the sender are performed for all of the detected data communication port.

3. A data conversion rule switching device according to claim 1, wherein the respective target devices are devices in which software is activated, and the control in response to operation of the plurality of controls is control on operation of the software.

4. A data conversion rule switching device according to claim 1, wherein the respective target devices can be connected to the data conversion rule switching device via a physically single cable, and the converted operation data is transmitted to the respective target devices via the cable.

5. A method of switching between a plurality of data conversion rules in accordance with a target device in order to respectively control a plurality of target devices in response to operation of a plurality of controls, said method comprising:

15 a step of externally connecting the respective target devices to a switching device and assigning a plurality of data communication ports one by one to the respective target devices for transmitting operation data corresponding to operation of the plurality of controls and generated in response to the operation to the plurality of the target devices;

20 a step of setting a data conversion rule suitable for control of the target device assigned to the data communication port, for each of the plurality of data communication ports;

a step of selecting a desired data communication port from among the plurality of data communication ports;

25 a step of converting operation data corresponding to operation of the plurality of controls and generated in response to the operation in accordance with the data conversion rule set for the selected data communication port;

and

a step of sending the converted operation data to the selected data communication port.

5 6. A computer program containing program instructions executable by a computer and causing said computer to execute:

10 a process of assigning a plurality of data communication ports to which target devices are externally connected, to respective target devices one by one for transmitting operation data corresponding to operation of the plurality of controls and generated in response to the operation to the target devices;

a process of setting a data conversion rule suitable for control of the target device assigned to the data communication port, for each of the plurality of data communication ports;

15 a process of selecting a desired data communication port from among the plurality of data communication ports;

a process of converting operation data corresponding to operation of the plurality of controls and generated in response to the operation in accordance with the data conversion rule set for the selected data communication port; and

20 a process of sending the converted operation data to the selected data communication port.